

MITIGATION ACTION PLAN

for the

Interstate Intertie

Centennial Plan

Harry Allen-Mead 500-kV Transmission Line Project

(DOE/EA-1470)

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

October 2004

Western Area Power Administration

Mitigation Action Plan

1.0 HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Western Area Power Administration (Western) was a cooperating agency in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1470) for the Harry Allen-Mead 500-kV Transmission Line Project (Project). Western has adopted the EA to support its National Environmental Policy Act requirements. Based on the EA, Western has determined that the proposed Project would not result in any significant environmental impacts, and the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) will not be required. The basis for this determination is described in the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) issued concurrently with this document.

Nevada Power Company (Nevada Power) proposes to build a 48-mile, 500-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line between the Harry Allen Substation, northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada, and the Mead Substation, southeast of Las Vegas. The Project would be part of the Interstate Intertie of the Centennial Plan. Of the 48 miles, 32 miles are within lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 8 miles are within lands managed by the US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), and 4 miles are within lands managed by Western. The BLM was the Lead Agency in preparing the EA and Western and USBR were cooperating agencies. A number of environmental protection measures are included with the proposed action to minimize potential adverse environmental effects.

The requirements for preparing a Mitigation Action Plan (MAP) are specified in 10 CFR part 1021 (Section 331(a), Department of Energy National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures). These guidelines state that DOE shall prepare a MAP for commitments to mitigations that are essential to render the impacts of a proposed action not significant. The guidelines further state that the MAP shall also explain how mitigation will be planned and implemented. The EA analyzed the impacts of the proposed Project. Western has determined that three sets of mitigation measures are essential to render the impacts of the proposed action not significant: 1) Implement botanical resource protection measures, 2) Comply with the provisions and stipulations of the Biological Opinion, dated April 28, 2004, and migratory bird protection provisions, and 3) Comply with the provisions and stipulations of the Project's National Historic Preservation Act Programmatic Agreement.

2.0 FUNCTION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE MITIGATION ACTION PLAN

The following sections describe the plans and actions by which Western will implement and verify mitigation action commitments described above.

Section 3.0 describes the monitoring and verification of mitigation actions and the reporting requirements. Section 4.0 describes the mitigation commitments and action

plans for the Project. The commitment to the mitigation is presented along with an action plan composed of the tasks, responsible party, and schedule anticipated for the mitigation.

3.0 MITIGATION ACTION PLAN MONITORING AND REPORTING SYSTEM

Section 5.d. (11)(f) of DOE Order 451.1B, National Environmental Policy Act Compliance Program, requires Western to report MAP activities in its Annual NEPA Summary Report, published by January 31 of each year. This annual report will reflect new information or changed circumstances. If major changes to mitigation included in this MAP are necessary, these changes will be described in the annual report. The annual report will be made available to the public.

Nevada Power will contract with a compliance inspection contractor (CIC) who will ensure compliance in the field with all provisions and stipulations. A member of Western's environmental staff will verify mitigation results and determine if the mitigation actions achieved their intended purpose. Existing organizational and administrative controls will be used to gather information regarding implementation and status of mitigation actions. Such controls include applicable reporting systems, inspection, and verification. The results of inspection and verification will be reported on the anniversary of the MAP in the Annual Report. When mitigation actions are completed and verified, the information will be included in the Annual Report.

4.0 MITIGATION COMMITMENTS AND ACTION PLANS

Mitigation practices were defined for the Project in the EA and were considered during the assessment of impacts of the Project. Nevada Power has committed to management practices for the construction of transmission lines. These mitigation measures are identified in Chapter 2, Table 2-3 of the EA. Measures not addressed as part of this MAP will be implemented as part of Nevada Power's management practices. Many of the items in the MAP were addressed in the EA by resource area and will serve as a source for defining construction and maintenance stipulations for the Project.

Table 4.1 outlines the mitigation measures to reduce impacts to less than significant and action items necessary to assure the mitigation is implemented to protect biological and cultural resources.

**TABLE 4.1
MITIGATION MEASURES**

Resource, Responsible Party, and Schedule		Actions Needed To Avoid Significant Impact
Vegetation	<p>Las Vegas Bearpoppy</p> <p>All action will be implemented and monitored by CIC and Western's environment and lands representatives.</p> <p>Schedule: TBD</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No construction of new roads or upgrading of existing access roads would occur in areas identified for or adjacent to Las Vegas bearpoppy restoration. 2. Minimal construction of new roads or upgrading of existing access roads would occur in areas identified as sensitive plant habitat. 3. In designated areas, sensitive plants and/or habitat would be flagged and structures would be placed to allow spanning of these features, where feasible within limits of standard structure design. 4. All new access roads not required for maintenance would be permanently closed using methods approved by the landowner/manager (e.g., stockpiling and replacing topsoil, or rock replacement). 5. Temporary disturbance would be restored using cacti and yucca originally salvaged from the site. The material would be salvaged by an experienced contractor, stockpiled in an area approved by Western within the right-of-way, and then transplanted to reclaimed sites. BLM's protocols for proper maintenance of the material would be followed. Restoration would be in accordance with BLM's approved plan.
Wildlife	<p>Desert Tortoise, Burrowing Owl, Gila Monster, Chuckwalla, Migratory Birds</p> <p>All action will be implemented and monitored by CIC and Western's environment and lands representatives.</p> <p>Schedule: TBD</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terms and conditions of the biological opinion, dated April 28, 2004, would be implemented during all activities. 2. Structures would be placed to avoid sensitive wildlife and/or to allow conductors to clearly span the features, within limits of standard structure design. 3. If construction of the is not begun until after the commencement of burrowing owl breeding season (mid March-August), all burrows, holes, crevices, or other cavities on the construction site would be collapsed after a qualified biologist thoroughly checks them for inhabitants. If authorization for the plan is not provided until after the commencement of breeding season and burrowing owls can be seen within the area during surveys, behavioral observations would be done by a qualified biologist to

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		<p>determine their breeding status. If breeding behavior is observed, an area large enough to prevent disturbance to the adults (as determined by Western) would be avoided until the chicks fledge to ensure the chicks do not abandon the nest.</p> <p>4. In compliance with Nevada Administrative Codes regarding protection of the gila monster, standard NDOW protocols would be followed if a gila monster is encountered during construction activities.</p> <p>5. Outside of riparian areas, if construction must occur during the breeding season of migratory birds (March 15th – July 30th), the plan area would be surveyed for nests prior to implementation. If a migratory bird nest were found with nestlings present, the area would be avoided until birds fledge.</p>
Cultural Resources	<p>Eligible cultural resource sites</p> <p>All action will be implemented and monitored by CIC and Western's Federal Preservation Officer.</p> <p>Schedule: TBD</p>	<p>1. All provisions of the Programmatic Agreement will be strictly adhered to.</p>